

**DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL**

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March 11, 2005  
PR 05-38

**ABC CHECKS 20 FILLMORE & CASTAIC LOCATIONS AND ALL COMPLY WITH THE LAW**

**Fillmore & Castaic-** Investigators of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) conducted a minor decoy operation in the Communities of Fillmore and Castaic March 5, 2005, where a minor under the direct supervision of ABC investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from 20 retail licensees. None of the locations sold alcoholic beverages to the minor.

“It is encouraging to run a law enforcement operation where every business complied with the law,” said ABC Director Jerry Jolly. “We must continue to be vigilant so we can keep alcohol away from youth and prevent alcohol-related car crashes. Businesses that sell alcohol play a huge role in that effort.”

Investigators said they visited 11 businesses in Fillmore and 9 in Castaic. Every location refused to sell alcohol to the decoy.

Those who sell alcoholic beverages to a minor face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Young people under the age of 21 have a higher rate of drunken driving fatalities than the general adult population.

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below. The latest violation rate state-wide is almost 24 percent, or nearly one in five retail licensees selling to minors.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.